

# **A Thanksgiving for Christ's Work in His Church in the Community**

*A Suggested Eucharist — Monmouth Diocesan Council for Church and Society*

The enclosed order of service provides a full Eucharist for parishes to use as a means of offering thanks for the work they are doing amongst the larger community—for celebrating the signs of the Spirit's blessings on efforts both large and small—and to pray for the Spirit's continuing guidance, inspiration, and presence in their work.

The overall framework and theme is our expectation of Christ's Coming Kingdom—the Second Advent—when the whole earth shall be renewed under the Lord who is to come in glory. Consequently, the most distinctive part of the service, the Intercessions, aims to use a standard Advent wreath / stand in a new way and an unexpected time of year.

The liturgy follows closely the 2004 'Red Book' Order, and the Bishop has authorised the Council for Church and Society to promote it. Churches may feel free to adapt the order as appropriate for their congregations, or to lift elements for use in non-Eucharistic settings—although, as the meaning is conveyed most clearly in the Intercessions, we do recommend keeping those largely intact.

You are warmly encouraged to provide space, as befits your own particular parish, for celebratory words, prayers of thanksgiving, and prayers for God's blessing upon particular, named works that your people may have undertaken. One such space is provided in the first bidding of the Intercessions—but you may find other points equally appropriate.

We have provided you with hard copy text. For those who would like to adapt or otherwise format the service, we shall look to make electronic copies available through the Diocesan website at <http://www.churchinwales.org.uk/monmouth/> .

We hope this service will be of value to you, and that your congregations will welcome the chance to celebrate the works going on amongst them now, whilst still looking forward to new things.

We welcome feedback and suggestions.

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## 1 The Gathering

*A hymn, psalm, or anthem may be sung.*

Grace and peace be with you.  
**And keep you in the love of Christ.**

*Either*            **Father of glory, holy and eternal,  
look upon us now in power and mercy.  
May your strength overcome our weakness,  
your radiance transform our blindness,  
and your Spirit draw us to that love  
shown and offered to us by your Son,  
our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

*Or*                 **Heavenly Father, all hearts are open to you.  
No secrets are hidden from you.  
Purify us with the fire of your Holy Spirit,  
that we may love and worship you faithfully,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

### THE CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Eternal God, your call comes to us  
not in unattainable tasks but through Jesus,  
who saw in us sisters, neighbours, brothers, family.  
We confess our self-centredness,  
ignoring Christ's power to build community.  
Too often, we walk by on the other side,  
blind to our blindness.

Lord have mercy.  
**Lord have mercy.**

Eternal God, your call comes to us  
in what we know, in what is familiar.  
You are found in the centre of life,  
in its vigour and dynamic activity.  
We confess our avoidance of the moment,  
relegating too often your love  
to another time, another place, another world.

Christ have mercy.  
**Christ have mercy.**

Eternal God you have given your church  
the authority to proclaim your grace  
and inspired us to reveal  
your heart of compassion.  
Forgive us when we have used our calling  
to manipulate and our kindness to dominate.

Lord have mercy.  
**Lord have mercy.**

Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent,  
have mercy on you and set you free from sin,  
strengthen you in goodness, and keep you in eternal life;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **THE GLORIA IN EXCELSIS**

**Glory to God in the highest  
and peace to his people on earth.  
Lord God, heavenly King,  
Almighty God and Father,  
we worship you, we give you thanks,  
we praise you for your glory.  
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,  
Lord God, Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world:  
have mercy on us;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:  
receive our prayer.  
For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High,  
Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father. **Amen.****

### **THE COLLECT**

God our Father, you have made our world and seen that it is good. You made us Lord,  
and we are yours. Grant to us, created to complete your work, the bright, delightful vision  
that makes us care for what we do. Grant that we may so use your gifts that all your  
creatures may enjoy the harmony you planned. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, who  
reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## 2 The Proclamation of the Word

### AN OLD TESTAMENT READING

*A reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah. [41.17-20]*

When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue is parched with thirst, I the Lord will answer them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers on the bare heights, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. I will put in the wilderness the cedar, the acacia, the myrtle, and the olive; I will set in the desert the cypress, the plane and the pine together, so that all may see and know, all may consider and understand, that the hand of the Lord has done this, the Holy One of Israel has created it.

This is the word of the Lord.      *or*      Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.  
**Thanks be to God.**

### THE PSALM [104: 24-34, 35b]

*Response: O Lord, how manifold are your works.*

O Lord how manifold are your works:  
in wisdom you have made them all, the earth is full  
of your creatures.  
There is a great and mighty sea:  
which teems with living things both great and small.  
Upon it sail the ships: and there is Leviathan,  
the monster you made to sport in it.      **R.**  
All these look to you:  
to give them their food in due season.  
What you give them they gather up:  
when you open your hand, they are filled  
with good things.      **R.**  
But when you hide your face they are dismayed:  
when you take away their breath they die,  
and return to the dust they came from.  
When you send out your spirit they are created:  
and you renew the face of the earth.      **R.**  
May your glory O Lord endure for ever:  
may you rejoice O Lord in your works.  
When you look at the earth it trembles:  
when you touch the mountains they smoke.      **R.**  
I will sing to the Lord as long as I live:  
I will praise my God while I have my being.  
May my meditation please the Lord:  
as I show my joy in God.  
Bless the Lord O my soul.      **R.**

## **A NEW TESTAMENT READING**

*A reading from the Book of Revelation. [21.1-7]*

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.' And the one who was seated on the throne said, 'See, I am making all things new.' Also he said, 'Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.' Then he said to me, 'It is finished! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children.'

This is the word of the Lord.      *or*      Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church  
**Thanks be to God.**

## **THE GOSPEL**

*A gradual hymn may precede the Gospel.*

Listen to the gospel of Christ according to Saint John. [1.1-14]

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.  
**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **THE SERMON**

## AN AFFIRMATION OF THE FAITH

### *The Nicene Creed*

**We believe in one God . . .**

## INTERCESSIONS

*The prayers centre on the fulfilment of Christ's coming Kingdom. We use an Advent candle stand (with or without foliage) to remind us that, as Israel awaited the Messiah, so we await creation's final redemption. To distinguish from the first Advent, we use white candles, symbolising the perfect glory of that which we still expect. The first of these is lit from the Paschal candle, with subsequent candles lit from the previous one. A priest may lead the intercessions alone, or (ideally) members of the congregation may take turns with each section.*

Creating and Redeeming God, you have given us a vision of a new heaven and a new earth. As once your people awaited a Messiah, now we await the fulfilling of Christ's Kingdom and his coming in glory. Help us, your Church, to remain faithful to that vision—and to work, in word and deed, for Christ's glory in all creation.

*Light the first candle.*

We give thanks for your Spirit's hand upon your Church's work—in our community and throughout the world, [*especially for \_\_\_\_\_*]. We thank you, Lord, for the part you give us as you work out redemption in our place. For all that by your grace we have done and for all that in your power is left to do, we pray your blessings. Teach us faithfulness in small things as well as large.

Lord, hear us.

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

*Light the second candle.*

Hear us, Lord, as we pray for those down the generations whose lives have been touched by the prayers and the outreach of this, our house of worship. We pray for those whom we have met along our journey towards the Kingdom. Where wounds have been healed, and comfort given, and friendship offered, we give you thanks and praise.

Lord, hear us.

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

*Light the third candle.*

Remember, O Lord, all those around us who still yearn for Good News. Where needs have not been met, nor sometimes seen, we pray for the vision and wisdom to make an approach. Teach us to seek out those who are struggling in mind, body, and spirit—and those who believe they are alone. Send your Spirit upon them—and upon us—that in our face they may find the face of Christ.

Lord, hear us.

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

*Light the fourth candle.*

Gracious God, we seek by your Spirit to plant the seeds of a new Kingdom—where life is renewed, and joy is eternal. Where we see the harvest, give us joy in your glory. Where the fields seem barren, give us hope that your Spirit yet blows where he will. And in all that we do, perfect our faith in the source of the water of life, your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Lord, hear us.

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

*Light the centre candle.*

Creating and Redeeming God, you have given us a vision of a new heaven and a new earth: resources conserved, earth tended, trees planted, oceans teeming, prisoners freed, injustice ended, broken hearts healed, nations at peace. Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, alert the nations, enthuse the Churches, receive our commitment, and so entwine our lives with your purpose that earth and heaven will sing with your glory—who is alive and reigns, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## **4 The Peace**

St. Theresa of Avila once said:

‘Christ has no body now but yours.’

So let us live as his body in the world,  
and share all that makes light and peace.

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**And also with you.**

*A sign of peace may be exchanged.*

*A hymn, psalm, or anthem may be sung.*

## **5 The Thanksgiving**

*The Eucharist is celebrated as normal.*

## 6 The Communion

*The priest breaks the bread with the following words:*

*Either*        We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.  
**Though we are many, we are one body,  
for we all share in one bread.**

*Or*            Every time we eat this bread and drink of this cup  
**we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.**

*This anthem may be used here or during the communion:*

**Jesus, Lamb of God: have mercy on us.  
Jesus, bearer of our sins: have mercy on us.  
Jesus, redeemer of the world: give us your peace.**

*The priest offers one of the following invitations:*

*Either*        Jesus is the Lamb of God  
who takes away the sins of the world.  
Happy are those who are called to his supper.  
**Lord, I am not worthy to receive you,  
but only say the word and I shall be healed.**

*Or*            God's holy gifts for God's holy people.  
**Jesus Christ is holy,  
Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.**

*Or*            Come, let us receive the body and blood of our Lord Jesus  
Christ, given for us, and feed on him in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving.

*The priest and people receive the communion.*

*The sacrament is administered with these words:*

*Or*            The body of Christ keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**  
*Or*            The body of Christ, the bread of life. **Amen.**  
*Or*            The body of Christ. **Amen.**

*Or*            The blood of Christ keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**  
*Or*            The blood of Christ, the true vine. **Amen.**  
*Or*            The blood of Christ. **Amen.**

*Silence is kept, or a hymn may be sung.*

## POST-COMMUNION SENTENCE

'O Lord how manifold are your works: in wisdom you have made them all, the earth is full of your creatures.' *[Psalm 104:25]*

## PRAYERS AFTER COMMUNION

Give thanks to the Lord for he is gracious:  
**his love is everlasting.**

Holy God, Creator of us all, source of life and goodness.  
Awaken in us a sense of the sacred.  
Awaken in us a desire to grow and break new ground.  
Awaken in us a passion for justice.  
So that all may grow to fullness and produce fruit that will endure and bless,  
as we walk together into the new world where you have gone before. **Amen.**

## BLESSINGS

May the mystery of God enfold us.  
May the wisdom of God uphold us.  
May the fragrance of God be around us.  
May the brightness of God surround us.  
May the wonder of God renew us.  
May the loving of God flow through us.  
May the peace of God deeply move us.  
May the moving of God bring us peace.

And the blessing of God almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be with you all and remain with you—now and in paradise, always. **Amen.**

## DISMISSAL

You shall go out with joy, and be led back in peace;  
the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song,  
and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. *[Isaiah 55:12]*

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.  
**In the name of Christ. Amen.**